

Kong: The Hollow Earth by DoctorpooandtheTURDIS

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Summary:

A sudden surge of a mysterious new threat on Skull Island drags Kong into the hidden world far beneath the surface of the earth. If he wants to get home, he'll have to kill the one in charge, but it won't be easy.

Lucky for him, there are plenty of allies ready to help him out.

1. Chapter 1

Far into the tropics of the planet Earth, at the heart of a strange nexus of undersea currents lay Skull Island, a small mass of land, with the only inhabitants being a few select megaspecies.

One of these, was the island's biggest -and baddest- predator. Kong.

King Kong. Formerly known as Billy Hargrove, the only thing he cared about now was protecting his island, and living in peace. Occasionally, a face from his former life, Max, showed up to visit, but today was not one of those days.

No, today was a different day.

Kong was alone, wandering around the border of his island, looking out to the sea, when suddenly, he was knocked to the ground by something.

Rolling over, Kong grabbed onto its snapping jaws, looking at it closely. It looked like a strange lizard, pulling itself along with two, muscular three-clawed arms, with a skull on the outside of its head. Kong threw it off, the creature howling as it was sent flying across the landscape.

The skullcrawler shook its head, spitting out blood, before turning tail to run.

Kong jumped back to his feet, sprinting after the creature that dared to challenge him in his domain.

The enormous ape stopped off by his den along the way, grabbing the gigantic sledgehammer he preferred to make use of, before taking off after the creature again.

Kong came to a stop as the skullcrawler did as well, standing at the edge of an enormous pit in the island. He was familiar with the place, but it was a place he dared not venture, as the bottom was so far down, light itself faded out before he could see it.

The crawler released a bellow, and the ground began to quake, as a

pack of creatures just like it crawled up from the depths, snapping and snarling as they emerged into the sunlight.

The skullcrawlers looked at each other, growling, before looking to Kong.

Kong stared them all back in response, barring his teeth.

Ahh! Ah!

Ahh! Ah!

Kong twirled the super sledge around in his hands, before the army of crawlers began to pull themselves along, sprinting towards him.

We come from the land of the ice and snow

From the midnight sun where the hot springs flow

Kong roared, winding up, bringing the rocket-powered sledgehammer across in a sweep that obliterated the heads of the crawlers in front, sending blood flying everywhere and the bodies careening into each other.

The hammer of the gods

Will drive our ships to new lands

A crawler leapt into the air, only for Kong to grab it, slamming it down into the ground, bringing the super sledge right down on top of it.

To fight the horde, sing and cry

Valhalla, I am coming

The skullcrawlers screeched with fury, slamming into each other in their mad attempts to overwhelm Kong with sheer numbers alone.

On we sweep with threshing oar

Kong roared, leaping into the air, bringing down the hammer directly into the ground.

Our only goal will be the western shore

The super sledge impacted, the ground rippling like water from the sheer force behind the strange rocket-hydraulic weapon.

The crawlers bellowed as they were thrown up, landing on their backs, some of them being sent plunging into the pit at the center of the island.

The creatures rolled back over, shaking off the disorientation caused by Kong's attack, crying in fury as they began to charge again.

Ahh! Ah!

Ahh! Ah!

Kong pounded his chest, snarling all the while as the crawlers came back for round two.

We come from the land of the ice and snow

From the midnight sun where the hot springs flow

Kong sprinted into them, swinging the super sledge with reckless abandon, knocking yet more crawlers into the pit, even as some continued to try and leap onto him and bite into his furry flesh.

How soft your fields so green

Can whisper tales of gore

Kong bellowed, bucking and throwing the crawlers on him back into the pit, leaving only a few still desperately trying to fight against him.

Of how we calmed the tides of war

We are your overlords

Kong pounded his chest in the ground, charging the remaining crawlers, knocking them into the hole into the ground, damning them to the darkness below.

On we sweep with threshing oar

Our only goal will be the western shore

One skullcrawler however managed to sink its talons into the rock, the others grabbing onto it, as it bit down into Kong's ape muscle, drawing blood as Kong screeched in pain.

So now you'd better stop

And rebuild all your ruins

Kong tried to punch the crawler so it would release him, to no avail. The sheer weight of the crawlers pulled the top one's claws from the stone, pulling Kong with them.

For peace and trust can win the day

Despite of all your losing

Kong tried to grab onto the side of the pit, clutching on for dear life, even as the insurmountable weight hanging from his leg pulled him into the pit. He tried to pull himself up, straining and struggling all the while, before the mass of the skullcrawlers won over, and the ground gave way, sending them *all* plunging into the darkness.

Kong let out one last, enraged roar, as the sky above became too distant to see.

Far, far below the surface of the earth, there existed another world. Not some slice of prehistoric glory that had been shielded, or a pocket of flora and fauna where none should have survived...

But *another* world. The outermost surface of the earth, the layer that humans lived on, was but an outer shell, floating above the ground of the inner earth. And it was no more hellscape either, but a place as vast and diverse as the surface, with great, frozen tundras, vast arid deserts, dense humid jungles, and wet plains that extended as far as the eye could see. Light came from the roof above, a uniform layer of strange crystals that would illuminate and bathe the ground dozens

of kilometers below in sunlight indistinguishable from the surface above.

And as it had its own ecosystem, so too, did the inner Earth have its inhabitants.

One of these was a massive, three-headed wolf. The Norse knew him as Fenrir, the Greeks knew him as Cerberus, but to himself, he was simply the Gatekeeper. His duty was an ancient one.

There was only *one* passage from the Below to the Above. In ancient times, that passage was open, free to be used by whoever desired it, whenever they desired it. The realms of Below and Above existed together, creatures moving in between without a care.

However, when Battra attacked, things changed. The dark reflection of Mothra did not know of the existence of the Below, and so, Gamera ordered the Below to be sealed in order to preserve the life that called it home, before going to valiantly face off Battra, buying time for Mothra to arrive and save them all.

That was millennia ago, and none of them knew whether or not Mothra was victorious, or if she'd even shown up at all. As such, the Gatekeeper remained, moving with the portal to the surface, keeping close watch to make sure nothing from Above sought to breach it... and making sure nothing from Below would attempt to go up, alerting whatever was on the surface in the event that it was hostile.

But, alas, all things do come to an end. And after countless thousands of years of keeping the passageway tightly guarded, the Gatekeeper's watch finally came to an end. Not because of a dereliction of duty on his part, but because of swift and strong attacks on the part of others. The skullcrawlers.

The crawlers were something closer to a disease than simply creatures native to the Below. Great hordes of them hatched at once, swarming, consuming all in their path. Entire jungles had been laid to waste as the crawlers spread and fed off the land faster than it could support them.

In the old days, it would have been a simple matter to deal with

them, but they had swiftly become a problem that none of them could deal with.

Least of all, the Gatekeeper.

Crawlers fell from the portal, as the ones on the ground bit and chewed into his flesh, the enormous hound spitting fire back at them in response.

The bone in one of his forelegs snapped, and the Gatekeeper fell, letting out a burst of fire, obliterating those nearest to him, at the cost of his strength. He prepared himself to go down fighting, when something else fell from the portal, a tall, bipedal hairy figure, landing on the ground nearby.

The other crawlers slowly advanced on the two, helpless monsters, before suddenly stopping, as a deep, clicking bellowing echoed throughout the Below, summoning the crawlers back to their leader.

As the skullcrawlers retreated, the Gatekeeper's perception of the world slowly went dark and blurry.

Consciousness returned to Kong some time later, the force of the impact having knocked him out. The titanic ape slowly forced his eyes open, shivering, to find that he landed face-down in snow. Grey clouds loomed overhead, a blizzard spitting out snow in all directions.

Kong got to his feet, the pain in his leg being disregarded, as he slowly looked around, confused. The last thing he remembered was falling into the pit on the island, *in the tropics*, but this...

This place looked more like *Narnia*. He wound up at the bottom of a vast, mountainous valley, filled with snow, a cold chill sweeping through. And then there was the matter of gravity. It was so high, Kong was hunched over, like an actual ape.

Coughing and growling caught his attention, and Kong pulled himself over, to a three-headed wolf, laying on the ground. Chunks of his body had been torn open, revealing his beating heart to the elements,

tinting the snow red. Two of the heads were inert, except for one, the center.

“Intruder...” The wolf growled. “Go to... the den... northeast. Find Anguirus. Stop... Ragnarök.”

Kong huffed, his breath crystalizing in the air, as he looked at the wolf. “Who? Talk, dog.” He ordered, only for the wolf’s eyes to close.

Kong snarled to himself, as he looked around. Well, the crawlers were gone, but that was small comfort to him now. He had no idea where he was, how he got here, or how to get back. And there was a blizzard going on.

Kong frowned to himself. The wolf was dead now, so no answers from him. But, he did mention an Anguirus...

Perhaps they would have the answers.

Notes for the Chapter:

Here be my [Tumblr](#), yar!

2. Chapter 2

Finding his bearings in this land, this... strange, strange place. There was no sun, the sky just glowing and providing light on its own, so trying to find the sun, figure out if it was going up or down, and then piecing together the cardinal directions from there wasn't possible. Yet, what he *could* do, was rely on the other monsters he knew to piece together the directions from there.

Godzilla stayed unmoving at monster island for the most part, and monster island was to the west. So, that was west figured out. With those two directions, north and south became easy, and so, Kong set out to the northeast, dragging his super sledge behind him.

The thick blanket of clouds above constantly showered down snow, blowing snow across Kong's tracks, wiping them away just as quickly as he created them. The great ape was thankful for his thick fur, the exterior serving well to keep him warm, even as the cold tried to eat away at him incessantly.

As he walked, climbing the rising and falling hills at the base of the truly enormous mountains, Kong found himself contemplating what this place was, and how he got here. He remembered falling into the pit, the one place on skull island where he kept far away from.

Was the pit some kind of... gateway? Like the rabbithole from *Alice in Wonderland*? Or perhaps he was actually *inside* the earth. That should have been insane, but...

He was an ape the size of a building who lived on a tropical island and used a rocket-powered hydraulic sledgehammer to fight his enemies. A secret world hidden deep beneath the earth couldn't be ruled out with that in mind. Plus, it did give a reason as to why the sky didn't have a sun.

Kong reached one of the hills' peaks, stopping to try and catch his breath. The cold was so bad, it was stinging his nose as he breathed.

The giant ape looked around, taking in the vast landscape before him. The view of the west was blocked by a mountain, so, no help

there. To the south there was an ocean, to the east, what appeared to be grasslands, and to the north, more snowy plains.

Kong sighed as, in the path he was supposed to be taking, there was the snowy plains. However, his eyes caught the shadow of something else. An artificial structure built high on the mountain, carved out of ancient stone, and if his eyes were right, sized for lifeforms like him. That must've been the 'den' that the Gatekeeper mentioned.

With a destination visible and in his mind now, Kong began to climb down the hill, ready to cross the valley.

Ancient torches on equally old walls of stone crackled, embers floating into the air with the smoke, before going dark. Illuminated dimly by these sources of light, there was a being sitting around a round, stone construct, what looked like a circular well built directly into the floor, with a pool of water inside.

A quadrupedal reptilian monster with a horn on his nose walked into the chamber, sitting across from the other monster inside.

The other monster, who appeared to be little more than a gigantic walrus, opened his eyes. "News from the west?" He assumed, speaking like a wise old sage with a raspy voice.

The quadruped nodded. "It's the skullcrawlers. They've moved away from the Passage."

The walrus slowly nodded. "Good... Good. Then again, I always assume the best with Cerberus on guard. Has he given you a report?"

The quadruped nervously gnawed his teeth. "No. I've not heard anything since Ragnarök's Horde retreated. That was hours ago."

The walrus looked to the well, eyes staring into the darkness. "Troubling... It's not like him to wait so long after a retreat before messaging us."

"I know," The horned one nodded, "That's what troubles me."

“Indeed...” The walrus turned to the well, “We’re living in troubling times. Troubling times indeed...”

Far to the west, at the bottom of a deep gash in the land, there sat an old submarine, most likely originating from some point in the sixties. The craft had obviously long since been beached, on account of the thick layer of dirt and snow caking it, but around the dorsal hatch, it was almost totally clear.

As such, a native of the nearby village, a young girl, was able to walk up to the hatch, knocking on it. In her arms, she held a small basket, filled with some foodstuffs and other assorted supplies.

After knocking, she waited for a few moments, before the hatch turned and swung open, and an elderly man with a head of long, curly white hair, poked his head out, looking at her.

“Ah, Jia!” The man grinned in pleasant recognition. “Is it time for the supply drop already?”

The girl nodded, holding out the basket. “Here you are, Doctor Who.”

“Oh, very nice, thank you.” He said, taking the basket. He looked inside, seeing the contents, and looked to her, silently inquiring.

“I put in a little bit more cheese.” Jia said, shifting nervously, knowing that she’d surely be berated for sneaking in extra by her caretakers.

“Well,” Who winked, tapping his nose slyly, “I won’t tell if you don’t.” He took a chunk of the cheese, taking a great big bite of it. “Mmm... you do always make the best cheese.”

The ten-year-old smiled, the aged man’s kind disposition always warming her heart. “Thanks.”

“Oh!” He suddenly shouted to himself, seemingly remember something. “I’ve got another one of my science things working again, you wanna see it?”

Jia's face brightened up at the offer. She always liked learning about science with Doctor Who. The others in the village were all "Because the Gods will it so," but not the kind old Doctor. He showed her *how* the universe worked instead of offering her a thin, flimsy excuse.

"Great!" Dr. Who climbed down the ladder first, like a gopher receding into his burrow. "Um, mind the mess. Had a busy Saturday night... if it *was* Saturday."

Jia disregarded the eccentric's remarks, slowly climbing down into the submarine's belly. According to him, it had once been a seafaring craft of the nation 'UK,' capable of even going *underwater*, but the accident that had brought him here had beached the craft, leaving it useless. Even if he was able to get it to the water, it wouldn't be able to move.

That saddened Jia, in a way. It was like a mechanical whale, unable to return to its home.

Her feet hit the deck, and she turned around, taking in the hollowed-out space that had become Who's home. Old bits of junk hanging from the ceiling clinked as Who pushed his way through the cluttered space, sitting the basket down, before taking his spot in a chair in front of a desk.

He looked to Jia, waving her over excitedly, and she approached, tilting her head curiously as he showed off what looked like a small, wooden crate with buttons on the front, and a slot to put something in.

Jia tilted her head. "What... is it?"

"This..." Dr. Who grinned excitedly, reaching for something by his side. "Is a cassette player. I used to have one that was smaller than this, but it got damaged when I came here. I've been trying to build one, and now, I have all the parts I need."

"Cassette..." Jia looked inquisitively to the Doctor. "What does that mean?"

"I'll show you." He offered, flipping through a small box. "Let's see..."

Oh, here we go!” He satisfactorily smiled, putting the tape in, and hitting the play button.

After a moment, tones began to filter out from the black ovals on the sides, the table rumbling slightly, as the Turtles began to sing their classic *Happy Together*.

Jia’s eyebrows shot up as her eyes went wide. She recognized what was happening, even if the instruments and voices were different. “It’s music!”

“That’s right,” Dr. Who nodded with a smile, “It’s music.”

“How does it do that?” Jia curiously asked, looking at the tape deck closer. “Are there little people inside?”

“Heh,” Who chuckled, “Nothing quite so fantastical, I’m afraid. On the inside of these tapes,” He held one up, “There’s a little ribbon. That little ribbon is coated with little bits of metal. On the inside of this,” He tapped the box, “There’s a machine that spins the ribbon from reel-to-reel, and as it passes through, a little machine reads the patterns in the iron, and sends electricity to here.” He patted the speakers. “The electricity causes these things to beat like little drums, in such a way that it causes it to sound like it sounded when people were together making the music.”

“Wow...” Jia blinked. “You can do all that with just a little machine?”

“Yep,” Who replied, “Anything’s possible with science.” He opened his mouth, about to continue, when something caught his attention, a pinging sound nearby.

Jia was on her feet first, running over to the little circle that Who called ‘RADAR,’ trying to see the little dot herself.

“What is it, is it Anguirus again?” The little girl curiously asked.

Who leaned over, frowning, as he looked over the radar. His eyes widened, as an *armada* of dots swept over the screen. “...skullcrawlers.”

Jia looked to him. “What?”

“Skullcrawlers!” Who repeated, flying into a panic, as he ran over to another console, looking over the readouts. They’d *never* come within range in groups this large, only one or two at the most. “Come on, come-“

The beached submarine rocked as the horde of skullcrawlers ran over it, and thus, that was it.

There was nothing they could do now.

Kong heaved as he climbed up the hill, finally reaching the stone building carved into the side. There appeared to be a door, made from *countless* chunks of wood stitched together, and Kong knocked on it, waiting to see if there would be a response.

The door opened, for Kong to be met with the visibly surprised face of a walrus kaiju.

“Answers.” Kong grunted. “Need... answers.”

The walrus looked Kong up and down, as the giant ape suddenly collapsed, the cold finally getting to him.

Notes for the Chapter:

Here be my [Tumblr](#), yar!

3. Chapter 3

Jia and Dr. Who just sat there, silent, still, the man watching the radar with anxious eyes, as the swarm of doom above tore through the helpless village.

After a few moments, the blips vanished, the rustling and banging outside going quiet.

“Are...” Jia fearfully shivered, “Are they gone?”

Dr. Who held up a hand in her direction, quietly ordering her to say there, as he moved over to the ladder, climbing up. He slowly opened the hatch, poking his head out, only to breath a minute sigh of relief as the crawlers had passed them by.

However, his relief quickly evaporated, as he lay eyes on the village in the distance.

“Oh, Jia... I’m sorry.” He gulped. “I’m so very sorry.”

Kong coughed, as he felt a warm liquid pass his lips, filling his stomach, warming his body.

“There, there, that’s it.” A raspy voice encouraged. “Get some warmth in you.”

Kong coughed. “Where-?”

“You’re in the Den.” The voice answered, and Kong’s eyes opened, as he recognized that as the place he was supposed to be going.

Kong tried to sit up.

“Whoa there, whoa,” The walrus kaiju slowed him down, “Take it slow. You’ve been out cold for some time now. What’s your name, young one?”

“Kong.” He answered. “Here looking for Anguirus.”

“Anguirus, you say?” The walrus looked on, scrutinizing. “What quarrel do you have with him, hmm?”

“No fight.” Kong grunted. “Was told to find him. Stop Ragnarök.”

The walrus’s eyes widened. “Ragnarök? ...who told you this?”

“Three-headed dog.” Kong replied. “Dead now. Skull things got it.”

“...Cerberus is dead?” He replied, turning away. “My oh my... we *are* in trouble, aren’t we?” He turned back to the ape. “Allow me to introduce myself. I am Maguma. One of the four guardians of the gate... although, I suppose it’s down to three now. Come, allow me to show you around.” He offered, letting Kong get to his feet.

“Millennia ago, a battle took place.” Maguma explained, pulling himself along the ancient stone floor, as Kong walked nearby. The place’s halls were enormous and cavernous, even to something of his size, seemingly intended to hold far more monsters at once than there were at the moment. “Between the goddess, Mosura, and her evil reflection, Battrra. As the dark one besieged the surface, we retreated here, to this secret world beneath the surface.”

“Hmph.” Kong grunted, holding his super sledge like a staff. “Anguirus.” He requested, narrowing his eyes at Maguma.

“We’ll be getting to him in due time, but you need to know the background.” Maguma replied. “The passageway between here and the surface was sealed off, guarded by Cerberus, but, the skullcrawlers occasionally attempt to force their way through his defenses. They’ve never succeeded... until now.”

“My island, up top,” Kong grunted, “They were there. Need to get back.”

“Ah, which is why you’re so determined to reach Anguirus.” Maguma recognized, as they entered into a large chamber, rather like an amphitheater. “Well, worry not, young one. We’ll see to it that you can go home... but first, there is a threat to be dealt with.”

“Crawlers.” Kong assumed with a grunt.

“Quite right.” Maguma replied. “Baragon!” He bellowed, to the horned quadruped above. “Procure some supplies for our bipedal friend, yes?”

“At once!” Baragon replied, running off.

“Supplies?” Kong looked to Maguma questioningly.

“Yes.” Maguma replied. “...the threat of the skullcrawlers has increased over the past several years. Where once they were merely feral dogs, they’re now intelligent, directed. Anguirus has been attempting to locate the source of this... new intelligence, but it’s been some time, and he’s had no breakthroughs. However, Cerberus’s death proves that we can wait no longer. The time to strike is *now*.”

“...Why tell me?” Kong questioned, as Baragon returned, carrying with him a thick cloak, and several pouches of food.

“Because,” Maguma poked him, “Cerberus told *you* to seek out Anguirus. He did not tell you to seek out *us*.” Maguma turned away. “Anguirus has not been to the den in quite some time. Cerberus knew that. He would not have told you to seek Anguirus if his intent was to set you loose upon *us*.”

“...Meaning?” Kong demanded.

“Meaning, Cerberus had something different intended for you,” Maguma replied, walking over to a pillar at the center of the room, taking a cube-shaped glass construct, glowing white, off the pillar, handing it over to Kong. “This is a very powerful object. You are to take it to Anguirus so that he may use its power to vanquish the threat. I had hoped he would be able to figure out a way to accomplish the task *without* using it, but alas...”

Kong looked at the cube, shaking his head. “No.”

Maguma chittered, as Baragon bristled. “I’m sorry?”

“Home.” Kong repeated.

“Young man, there won’t be a home for long unless you help us.” Maguma replied. “The crawlers will spread, consume, and move on with abandon. Not even the surface will be safe. And your presence here has already proven you’re *not* capable of stopping them on your own. Anguirus can use this to solve the problem, but first, it must be delivered to him.”

“...why not?” Kong gestured to Maguma, and then Baragon.

“I’m old,” Maguma answered. “And Baragon must remain here to defend the den. This cube is but *one* of several powerful objects we keep safe in here. If the skullcrawlers were to attain even one... the threat they pose would quickly become insurmountable. If you do not help us... the path back to your home will be forever out of reach.”

Kong snarled, taking the cube. “Where is he?”

“To the west of here, there is a human settlement.” Maguma replied. “Once you reach it, begin heading north. You will find him in a field of hot springs. The steam rising there serves well to mask his presence. He will see you coming before you see him.”

Kong huffed, throwing the enormous, thick cloak around his shoulders, placing the supplies and artifact he’d been given into a pouch, before grabbing his sledgehammer, clutching the device like a lifeline.

“Me find Anguirus.” Kong grunted. “Fix your mess.”

“Ha!” Maguma laughed. “With determination like that, I’d expect nothing less! Now, best be off.” He advised, showing Kong to the door. “It will be a long journey. Best make way during the daylight hours.”

“Hmph,” Kong sarcastically grunted, stepping out into the cold, frigid mountain valley, “Good. Time crunch.”

“You’ll work better under pressure.” Maguma replied, before shutting the door on Kong.

The titanic ape was left to his fate, and turned around, shaking his head, before he oriented himself in the proper direction, and set off.

Clad in a snow parka, the little native girl close to his side running with him, Dr. Who ran through the ruins of the settlement, some buildings on fire from having the wall sconces knocked loose, others gone entirely.

“Hello!?” Who called out frantically, trying to look for any survivors. The crawlers were gone... which meant that the chances of finding any people at all were low, low, low. “Can anyone hear me!? Hello!?”

“They’re gone... They’re gone...” Jia hyperventilated, tears beginning to stream from her eyes. “Malek, and Katara, and Tomkah, and-They’re dead! We’re next!” The little girl hysterically cried.

“Hey, hey,” Who turned around, crouching down in front of her, gently taking her hands, “I know you’re scared, grieving. You have every right to be. But your village isn’t the only one out here. The skullcrawlers are going to move on to the next.”

“S-S-So,” Jia shivered, “What are we supposed to do?”

“What are we supposed to do?” Who asked in response, “We’re scientists. We find the cause of the problem, and if it’s something we can fix, we fix it!”

Jia slowly nodded. “Right...”

“But what that means is this:” Who continued. “There is a time for tears, and a time to be courageous. Right now, I need you to be courageous. Tears will come later, as of here, this second, you need to get analytical. Observe everything. Be a scientist.”

“...A scientist.” Jia gulped anxiously. “Okay.”

Who smiled. “That’s my girl. Now,” He stood tall, brain already working at a thousand miles per hour, “The skullcrawlers normally stray far away from the village. Even while they were hunting, they gave us a wide berth, until now. Why?”

“I... I dunno.” Jia replied.

Who stopped, glancing at her. "I wasn't actually asking. Speaking aloud's a good rhetorical device for making the brain work."

"Oh."

Who turned, walking ahead down what had been the main road of the village. The skullcrawlers had gotten everything it seemed, in their ravenous hunger. The crops, the farm animals... there weren't even any human bodies left. Probably for the best, all things considered. The last thing Jia needed was to be scarred by seeing corpses piled in the streets.

"There must've been something here that drove the skullcrawlers away." Who hypothesized, rubbing his chin thoughtfully. "But what...?"

Jia blinked, tilting her head. "What about the thumper?"

Who blinked, snapping to quickly look at her. "'Thumper?'"

Jia nodded. "It's a big... hammer thing." She explained. "We're not supposed to talk about it with others though... The shaman said by speaking about it we'd take away its power."

Who snorted. "What a load of rubbish. Wait," He held up a finger, "Where is this thumper? Show me."

Jia nodded, taking the lead.

4. Chapter 4

“They never let people into this part of the Great House.” Jia explained, leading the way down into a basement. “They said it was... too fragile to disturb.”

Who walked through, looking up at a massive, metal rod, with a glowing crystal tip at the end, hanging suspended from the ceiling. Old pipes surrounded it, a latticework of steam-powered technology.

“Incredible...” Who muttered, approaching to get a better look at the device, “I had no idea your people were this advanced.” He turned to the little girl by his side, “How’d you know this was here?”

“Everyone does.” Jia shrugged. “We’re just... not allowed to talk about it.”

“Of course not,” Who shook his head, as he approached, “Amazing...”

Jia blinked, “What is?”

“Your people’s ingenuity!” Who gushed, pointing at the enormous machine that was bigger than the building above alone. “Look at this! Your people figured out a way to harness steam to move gears, pulleys, and pistons! In a tribal village!” He laughed, looking around, awestruck. “Do you know how long it took my people to do that? We didn’t get it worked out until about a hundred years ago, how long did it take your people? The stone carvings here look... hundreds of years old.”

“A thousand.” Jia answered, shifting on her feet. “They said we... figured it out because we had to. But we weren’t sure how it really worked.”

“Amazing...” Who smiled, looking up at the hammer hanging above. “Necessity truly is the mother of invention.” He frowned, looking at the glowing crystal at the end. “But what’s it do?”

Jia slowly shrugged. “I don’t know...” She reluctantly admitted. “I only know about the thumper because I snuck down here to see it.”

“Yes...” Who bit his lip, “Thumper... Oh, I see. It thumps the ground, creating small seismic waves that *humans* can’t detect, but the skullcrawlers are sensitive to, thereby encouraging them to steer far away from the village, keeping you guys safe.” He worked it out, but still frowned. “But what’s that bit at the end for?”

“...end bit?” Jia repeated.

Who looked to the wall, grabbing and dragging over a crate, so he could hop up onto the top, getting a closer look at the end tip. It was a crystal, carved into a pyramid shape, pointed directly at the ground.

Who frowned, bringing his hand closer, only to stop, as he could feel the something like a static charge around it. It must’ve functioned with the hammer in some way. He flicked it, only for the field to seemingly jump out, before receding.

“Ah, I see!” Who grinned, “Physical stimulation causes the field strength being emanated to increase. *This* must be what the crawlers are frightened of. The hammer drop is just to create a collision strong enough to generate a field powerful enough to cover the whole village. Clever. I wonder how your people figured it out... well, perhaps something to worry about another time.” He said, slipping the crystal pyramid into his pocket.

“Well...” Jia looked to the older man, curious. “What now?”

“That’s the quest-“ Who cut himself off as the ground rumbled. “The sub... we have to get back to the submarine!” He said, entering a mad dash, picking up Jia so she wouldn’t get left behind.

“What is it *now!*?” Jia fearfully asked, looking around.

“Worst-case scenario, more skullcrawlers!” The scientist replied. “Best case... I’ll let you know!” A shadow fell across them, and the scientist froze, as it was not, as he expected, reptilian in nature, but rather, bipedal.

Who slowly turned around, seeing a giant ape, holding an enormous sledgehammer, walking slowly into the village.

“Incredible...” Who breathed, staring up at the titanic monkey. “I’ve never seen one like you before...”

Jia gulped, as the giant ape’s eyes locked on them, and he began to approach. “Doctor Who... I think we should run.”

“No, no, not yet,” He told her quietly, “Look at those eyes... there’s intelligence behind those eyes. Perhaps...” He sat her down on the ground gently, looking up at the giant ape, putting his hands on full display. He made a series of odd motions, expressing silently with his face as he did so.

Jia looked at him curiously, as the ape stopped, blinking. “What are you doing?”

“American Sign Language.” The old scientist answered, looking up in awe as the giant ape seemed to actually be registering his movements, “Before I came here there were people who were trying to teach a chimpanzee how to communicate using it. Now, that hammer has the American flag on its head, and it looks purpose built, so, that was a weapon made for him, so he must have come from the surface. Now, apes and chimps are different species, but our giant friend here has five fingers on each hand, so, I wonder...” He signed again. Waiting for a response.

And then, the ape’s hands began to move.

Kong looked down curiously at the old man and young girl. He was just heading through, about to turn to head to that field of hot springs Maguma mentioned, when he spotted the two humans. It was nice to see a familiar species down here, if nothing else.

And then, the old man began to sign. Kong recognized it, of course. It was the only way him and Max could talk to each other. He liked Max. He should ask around for Max when he got back home.

Regardless, Kong focused on the man, who was signing.

‘Hello,’ The man greeted, waving his hands about, ‘*Can you understand me?*’

Kong could've merely nodded, but Max always got grumpy when he refused to respond in plain sign language, so, that's what he did. 'Yes.'

The old man smiled. *'Great. I am Doctor Who. This girl is Jia. You are...?'*

'Kong.'

'Pleased to meet you, Kong.' Who signed. *'Forgive me, but I have not seen a being like you walk around here before. Where did you come from?'*

Kong pointed up. *'Up top.'* He signed for good measure. *'Skull Island. Home.'*

Who's face broke out into an even bigger smile. "You understand that, Jia?" He turned to her, "He came from the surface! Like me!" He turned back to Kong. *'How did you come here?'* He signed.

'Accident.' Kong responded. *'Skull crawlers. Annoying lizards. Fell into a hole.'*

Who frowned. "I see..." He muttered. *'But why have you come here? To this village.'*

Kong frowned, evidently trying to find a sign for it. *'...anger us.'*

"Anger us?" Who repeated. "Anger us? What on earth does that mean?"

Jia gasped, tugging his sleeve. "Anguirus!"

"Anguirus... Anguirus!" Who put together himself, turning back. *'We know of him. He is honorable.'*

Kong grunted, *'Maybe. Just need him to get home.'*

Who chuckled. "Well, you're certainly to the point, aren't you?" He frowned, biting his lip, before signing again. *'May we come with you?'*

Kong blinked, looking at him curiously.

“What’d you do?” Jia asked.

“Asked him if we could go with him.” Who answered, before continuing. *‘I do not know how to farm, and this village’s farms were destroyed. Jia and I will not survive the winter. Could we come with you back to the surface, and go back to civilization?’*

Kong looked between the old man in the girl, evidently contemplating it. After a moment, he nodded, lowering his hand for them.

“Ah, transport of delight.” Who walked over, helping Jia up. “Thank you, my large furry friend!”

Kong huffed, beginning to walk to the north.

“I don’t understand,” Jia looked to Who, “Why do we have to go with him?”

“...There’s not enough left here to sustain us.” Who explained. “We wouldn’t make it. At least this way, he could offload us to one of the other settlements... if there’s others, or, we could go up to the surface.”

“The surface...” Jia tilted her head, “You talk about it a lot, but never say. What is it?”

“Well,” Who crossed his legs, pointing up to the sky, “It’s the place up there.” He looked to her. “Now that I don’t have to worry about making the others in your village really mad, I can tell you properly.”

“But... that’s not possible.” Jia frowned. “That’s not anything, it’s just... the sky.”

“Of course it is,” Who replied, “But it’s *not* either. See, your ‘sky’ is a super-durable, super-conductive crystal layer. Gravity tugs on it equally from all points, meaning it holds itself together without, you know, collapsing or falling on this little orb down here.” He looked at her, like a storyteller. “That crystal layer *alone* is kilometers-thick, which helps keep it stable during the tectonic plate activity above.” He leaned forward theatrically. “There’s a whole ‘nother world up there, like this one. With vast oceans, and frozen plains, and

expansive deserts. Forests, jungles, wetlands, everything down here.”

Jia gaped. “...they said our ancestors came from the heavens.”

“Well, they were right, in a way.” Who shrugged. “Looking at your people, I’d say you guys were a mix of ancient Norse, Polynesian, and perhaps a bit of Inuit. Culturally speaking, at least. You could be anything genetically.”

“...How do you think they got here?” Jia curiously asked.

“Same way as me, I guess.” Who guessed. “Voyagers setting sail to discover brave new lands, only to get too close to Skull Island and sucked into a whirlpool and spat out down here. I’d say your people were the result of perhaps a battle or a three-way chase or something, only for them to put aside their differences to survive after winding up here. Now...” He adjusted himself, getting comfortable. “We’ve got a road ahead of us. Best settle in.”

Jia nodded, making herself comfortable as well, as Kong kept walking.

5. Chapter 5

As Kong kept walking, the snow began to disappear, becoming place with vibrant green grassland plains, as the air grew more and more warm.

As Dr. Who explained, since the only light source down here was the crystal layer, which didn't conduct enough heat to warm the ground below. The *rest* of the heat in the place actually came via convection. Hot springs the size of the great lakes, geyser fields, and volcanic vents spat out heat that provided the rest of the warmth needed to maintain life, which was then moved around via simple physics, which also was responsible for the seasons down here.

Eventually, they came across said geyser field. A thick mist covered the pores of the earth, shrouding anything more than a few feet ahead in total obscurity.

Kong stopped, the two humans by his side looking up, as suddenly, the ground began to shake.

Kong turned, just in time to see something charging toward him. He brought up his hammer in a defensive manner, snarling.

"Whoa, whoa, hey." The charging monster stopped. "Hey, take it easy man."

Kong barred his teeth, growling at the figure to emerge from the mist.

The soft-spoken monster continued. "Hi there, my name is Anguirus, I'm kind of like the scout here in this territory. Maguma and Baragon are both good friends of mine, don't worry, they sent word you were coming."

"Sent word?" Kong grunted. "How?"

"Well, we have like these giant carrier pigeon things, yeah, all we have to do is slap a note on, send them flying, and that's it." Anguirus stood up. "You must be Kong. I hear you have something for me. ...

well, I know you have it, cause they told me, but I don't want to be rude, you know."

Kong nodded, reaching into the bag for the glass cube.

Dr. Who's eyebrows shot up, as he reached into his pocket, grabbing the pyramid, looking between the two of them.

"Thanks, man." Angirus took it, shattering it open. The shards of glass vanished, as a blue glow washed over his being. "Yeah, now we're in business." He looked up to Kong.

The giant ape stared back, blinking.

"What?" Angirus asked.

Kong said nothing, pointing to the hand that the cube had been in.

"Oh, that. Yeah." Angirus nodded. "Those are what we call power cubes... Though they're not always strictly cubes, so I suppose a better name would probably be power prism. It's probably a better name too because it's alliterative. Gamera made a whole bunch of 'em... and then decided that we couldn't use them until we were already likely about to die anyway, so, you know, that doesn't make a whole lot of sense. But it's cool, because you use one, you get a permanent supping-up. Yeah, now I have a sonic screech... Why wouldn't Gamera give them to us to begin with? We wouldn't be in this mess. Whatever, I can't speak for how turtles think. Now if you'll excuse me, I have to go kill the guy in charge of the skullcrawlers." He turned around, walking into the mist.

"Guy in charge?" Kong repeated, following. Angirus was the one who could show him the way home, damned if he let the monster out of his sight.

"Yeah, name's Ramarak." Angirus replied, taking the lead through the hot, humid field. "The guy's a dick, we hate him."

"Why?"

"Well, you know how there's always that one guy at parties who shows up trying to ruin things for everyone else because he has a bad

home life?" Anguirus began. "Yeah, that's Ramarak. But, I know where his den is, and how to kill him, so it shouldn't be difficult."

"Hmph." Kong grunted. "Nice."

Anguirus nodded, before a flapping caught his attention, and a large bird descended, a massive scroll in its talons. "Oh, what's this?" He stood upright, reaching up to take the scroll, before the bird flew off. "Skullcrawlers attacking den - Ramarak here - all in danger. Oh." Anguirus blinked. "Well, that doesn't sound good, does it? I wonder how they got past me without me noticing."

Kong grunted. "Pass to surface. Show me." He grunted.

"Sure, man." Anguirus obliged. "Well, the first thing you need to know is that it moves, like, a lot. We don't know where it's gonna be. But, if you find it, you should just be able to jump. Negative pressure wave."

"Cool." Kong nodded. "How find it?"

"Ah, that. That part's the harder one." Anguirus commented. "It only ever moves around on one track, so... you should just have to find a place where you know it's been, and you should be fine. Unless the skullcrawlers kill you first."

"They won't." Kong grunted, turning around. "Thanks."

"You're welcome!" Anguirus replied. "See you later, giant monkey!"

Kong sat Dr. Who and Jia down, signing to the old man. *'Need to find way out. Place where portal was. It comes back around.'*

"Hm..." Who frowned, before signing. *'The village you found us. The passage to the surface dropped my submarine there. But hold on a moment, what was that business with Anguirus and the scroll?'*

'Message.' Kong signed back. *'Skullcrawlers attacking. Not important.'*

"Not important!?" Who vocalized, causing Jia to look to him.

“What is it?” The young girl asked.

“He says the skullcrawlers are attacking, and it’s not important!” The scientist huffed, beginning to sign again. *‘The skullcrawlers are a threat, you must help!’*

‘Surface.’

‘The surface can wait, if the skullcrawlers get up there, it’ll spell doom for everyone up there!’ Who insisted.

Kong growled, hitting the ground. *‘No fight.’*

‘Kong, look at this little girl!’ He gestured to Jia. *‘Her village was just destroyed by them! If the skullcrawlers aren’t defeated, there’s going to be a thousand more just like her!’*

Kong looked to the girl, and slowly, he began to think, contemplate what he would do if it were Max standing there. He sighed, signing: *‘What am I supposed to do? I fought them before, they defeated me.’*

‘Take this.’ Who presented the pyramid to him, the construct embiggened in his hands. Who looked, awestruck at the sudden change of mass, before beginning to sign once more. *‘I believe it’s similar to the one Anguirus used, but I’m unsure. Either way, you’re not likely to be the only one fighting them this time.’*

Kong slowly nodded, placing it in his pouch. He’d save it, only in the event of him absolutely requiring it.

‘In the meantime, we’ll wait for you back at my ship.’ Who signed. *‘That’s where the exit terminus will be.’*

Kong nodded, picking them back up, heading off in that direction.

Jia watched as Kong walked into the blizzard, disappearing into the snow and fog. “What’s he doing?”

The corner of Who’s mouth tilted up. “Off to save the world.”

6. Chapter 6

“Hold the line!” Maguma bellowed, spitting out blasts of icy breath, coating the stone floors in a thick layer of ice. “Do not let them into the sacred chambers!”

“Yes, Maguma, I’m aware!” Baragon replied, vomiting hot lava onto the stone in front of him, melting it and turning it into a trap for those trying to break through. It was just the two of them, against a siege of skullcrawlers. After Kong had gone, Ramarak had attacked. He’d sensed that shards had been removed, and that *that* was his chance to attack.

A bipedal monster, the unholy offspring of a skullcrawler and some other strange beast, walked through the den. His skin was grey and scaly, with a goat-like outer skull on his head.

“MAGUMA!” He bellowed, over the roar of the skullcrawlers. He charged forward, the ice simply shattering under his feet, as he grabbed the walrus kaiju, throwing him to the ground.

“Ramarak.” Maguma rasped, rolling over to look up. “This is bold, even for you.”

“It is *Ragnarök!*” The Skull King hissed, bringing a bony sword down into the stone next to Maguma’s head. Baragon screeched, running over, only to be knocked away like a pest. “And I have been waiting a long time for this... My entire life I’ve been scorned by you and your followers, now look, as I become the one to lay death upon you!” He pulled his sword out, bringing it over his head, going to drive it down into the old sage’s head.

The air suddenly rippled as an ear-splitting screech echoed throughout the room. The air around Ragnarök rippled, and the Skull God was knocked off his feet, being thrown into the wall.

Maguma sat up, as his student helped him to his feet. “Anguirus! I was worried you would not make it here in time.”

“Yeah, I almost got lost in the mountains.” Anguirus admitted. “I did

see a Fae fountain though.”

The rubble that had once been the stone wall shifted, as Ragnarök clawed his way out, growling as he got back to his feet.

“It’s over, Ramarak,” Baragon growled, “You’re outnumbered.”

“...Outnumbered, yes.” The Skull King granted. “Outmatched...” He derisively laughed, shaking his head. “No.” He raised his sword, poised to attack, before something landed on his back, punching and beating into him. “Gah!”

Ragnarök stumbled around, and the others looked on, as Kong tried to take on the Skull King solo.

“Whoo!” Anguirus cheered, before blinking. “...I have no idea who that guy is.”

Ragnarök snarled, throwing Kong off, as his skullcrawlers used the shock to attack the other monsters. Kong hit the other wall, sliding to the ground, as his super sledge was thrown off his back, leaving him defenseless. The hordes of the beasts came from all angles, snapping and snarling at the heroic monsters, as Ragnarök advanced on Kong.

Kong tried to get up, only for the Skull King to plant a foot on his chest, drawing his sword.

“I am Ragnarök,” The King of the Skullcrawlers proclaimed, holding Kong down as his horde bit and chewed into his furred flesh, “God of Destruction. You? I don’t even know your name... what *possibly* gave you the idea you could defeat me?”

Kong lay there, feeling his own flesh being torn from his bones, as the smaller skullcrawlers gnawed at him...

And then, he got *angry*. He would *not* be beaten here. He wouldn’t allow it. He’d find some way.

Kong’s eyes locked on, to the crystal pyramid on the ground nearby, knocked loose from his pouch when Ragnarök threw him off his back. And then, he got an idea.

Who said it was like the cube that had been given to Anguirus, and it was a powerful tool, if nothing else, so...

Kong mustered the strength to free an arm, shattering the glass just as he'd seen Anguirus do with the cube.

With a thunderous, shattering crack, the skullcrawlers and Ragnarök were instantly blasted away, the Skull King's bone sword shattering in the process, as a lightning storm appeared on the ground, before charging into the air.

Ahh! Ah!

Ahh! Ah!

Kong, sparks radiating off his body, his eyes glowing hotter than the blazing sun, slammed into the ground. His wounds healed themselves, as his skin crackled with electricity.

The skullcrawlers besieging his allies turned, snarling, charging towards Kong.

Kong began charging in response, making a motion like he was throwing a spear, causing a grand bolt of lightning to slam into the horde, frying the ones in the front.

We come from the land of the ice and snow

From the midnight sun where the hot springs flow

"ATTACK!" Anguirus bellowed, letting out a sonic screech into the sea of crawlers, rolling into a ball, steamrolling all of the feral beasts in his way.

Kong growled, his hand shooting out to his super sledge all the way across the cavern. He couldn't remember where he'd heard it, but electricity and magnetism were linked, and the sledgehammer was metal.

Sure enough to what Kong was expecting, an arc of electricity shot out of his arms, as one of the invisible forces holding the universe together yanked his hammer back towards him.

The hammer of the gods

Will drive our ships to new lands

The super sledge's head and handle sparked and crackled, as Kong held it up, charging the newfound power flowing through his veins, before bringing it down on the ground.

A cascade of lightning was his reward, the bolts running through the ground, into the hostile crawlers.

Kong grinned, as he stood back to his full height, charging head-on into the skullcrawler horde like an unstoppable linebacker.

To fight the horde, sing and cry

Valhalla, I am coming

“RAAAAAAAAAAAAAARGH!” Baragon ferally screamed, leaping high into the air, drawing a deep breath. As he reached the apex of his jump, he let it all out, into a blazing stream of molten lava that rained down on the crawlers, coating them entirely.

On we sweep with threshing oar

Maguma was quick to hop in, taking a breath of his own, shooting out a beam of liquid nitrogen, cooling the lava and freezing the skullcrawlers in place.

Our only goal will be the western shore

Maguma and Baragon shared their equivalent of a fistbump, before going back to fighting.

Ahh! Ah!

Ahh! Ah!

Ragnarök watched with burgeoning fury as the monsters he had on the defensive had quickly turned the situation around, tearing through the skullcrawlers with an efficiency he hadn't expected. He growled, allowing to bony crests, smaller versions of his sword, to

emerge from his forearms, before joining the fight.

We come from the land of the ice and snow

From the midnight sun where the hot springs flow

“Outta the way!” Anguirus sarcastically warned, slamming into Ragnarök, knocking him down and sending him sliding.

Ragnarök slid into Kong’s legs, looking up into the giant ape’s snarling face.

Kong roared, eyes flashing with fury, as he brought his hammer up to bear.

How soft your fields so green

Can whisper tales of gore

Ragnarök rolled out of the way, jumping to his feet, as Kong slammed the hammer down. Lightning cascaded out, as Ragnarök jumped in time to dodge it, slashing across Kong’s face with his bony, serrated crests, sending blood flying everywhere.

Of how we calmed the tides of war

We are your overlords

Ragnarök staggered as a boulder, having been generated by Baragon and cooled by Maguma, slammed into his back. The King of the Skullcrawlers whipped around, intent on running them down.

Kong sent the super sledge flying into the back of Ragnarök’s head, before pulling it back. Ragnarök spun back around, face blazing with fury, before Kong sent the hammer sailing again, pulling it back, before doing it yet a third time.

On we sweep with threshing oar

Our only goal will be the western shore

Ragnarök, dazed for just a *second*, was too slow to react as Kong ran

up, swinging the hammer into the side of the ancient skullcrawler's head.

So now you'd better stop

And rebuild all your ruins

The outer skull on Ragnarök's head finally *shattered*, and he was sent to the ground, as the four monsters surrounded him.

For peace and trust can win the day

Despite of all your losing

Anguirus uncurled, as Kong unloaded a constant stream of lightning into Ragnarök, keeping the King of the Skullcrawlers paralyzed in place, as Baragon spat out lava onto the monster, Maguma doing the same with his liquid nitrogen.

"NO!" Ragnarök snarled, as the lava went down his gullet, and was swiftly cooled, turning his insides into stone. "I... AM... ETERNAL!"

Anguirus's face twisted, as Ragnarök was coated completely, and then cooled. The Ankylosaur monster drew a breath and let out a high-powered sonic screech.

The air in the chamber rippled, the stone foundation beneath their very feet cracking, as Ragnarök's petrified body toppled over, shattering into a thousand pieces.

Kong stood there, growling, as the sparks dissipated, his body going dark. Yet, he could still feel the power flowing through his cells. It must not have been just a temporary power-up, but a way to imbue a special ability on those who came into contact with it.

The titanic ape pounded his chest, roaring triumphantly, as the skullcrawlers that had once been under Ragnarök's command looked lost, aimless without the powerful psychic presence of their leader driving them. The skullcrawlers growled, looking at the monsters, before Kong roared again, slamming down his hammer like a staff.

Immediately, the crawlers retreated, like a dog seeing a bear,

scattering to the winds.

“We... did it.” Baragon heaved, gulping. “We killed Ramarak.”

“Ragnarök-“ Maguma corrected.

“Same difference.” Baragon huffed.

Kong walked over to the dead Skull King, looking down on him with disgust. “Hmph... Puny God.” He kicked the pile of rocks that had once been the being.

“What now?” Angirus wondered.

That was the question, indeed.

7. Chapter 7

Kong walked, Jia and Doctor Who in his hand, as the passage back to the surface began to slowly rotate toward them. Joining them, were Anguirus, Baragon, and Maguma. The humans waited patiently, although with a bit of anxiety in Jia's case, as Kong said his farewells.

"I cannot say again," Maguma rasped, "How much your assistance has helped us win this day. We've been trying to kill Ragnarök for millennia, and you show up and we accomplish it in a day. Thank you."

Kong nodded.

"I mean, the skullcrawlers aren't all dead, and there are still a whole bunch of human settlements they can go and kill very horribly very easily, but yeah, I guess we're safe for now." Anguirus mentioned. "Good luck on the surface, and try not to hit the sides on the way up."

Kong nodded, keeping that in mind for the future. Now that he knew this place was here... who knows, maybe he might come back.

The wind began to pick up from the pressure differential, as the tunnel to the surface began to rotate into position overhead. Kong held onto his human passengers tightly, before he waited, and jumped, putting as much force into his legs as possible.

Kong was carried up, higher and higher, riding the current all the way up. After *several* minutes of falling up, he began to slow, seeing the light approaching at the end. Kong grabbed the edge, and pulled himself up the side of the hole, carefully depositing Jia and Dr. Who on the ground.

Jia's jaw dropped, as she looked around, the night sky looming overhead with the moon and billions of stars. "Wow..."

"Yeah..." Who smiled, glad to finally be back home after so long. "It's something, isn't it?"

The silence of the night was broken by helicopters moving over, and rustling of the jungle leaves.

“Kong!” Max Mayfield shouted, running over. “You’re back! Sweet Jesus... *WHERE THE HELL HAVE YOU BEEN!?*”

‘Below.’ The ape signed. *‘Don’t ask.’*

Max huffed, crossing her arms. “You never tell me anything anymore...” She looked to his new human friends, frowning. “Who the hell are you guys?”

‘New friends.’ Kong signed, huffing. *‘Don’t get jealous.’*

“Me, jealous? No way.” Max huffed, looking at the new arrivals.

“Doctor Who,” The man pointed at himself, “Jia.” He gestured to the little girl.

Max snorted. “No way. Your name’s not *actually* Doctor Who.”

“Why what’s wrong with Doctor Who?” He looked Max up and down, affronted.

“Do you go flying around in time and space in a blue box?”

“...well, I think it’s a brilliant name.” Who huffed, crossing his arms, looking around. “So, what is this place?”

“You’re on Skull Island.” Max answered, crossing her arms. “MONT.”

Who blinked, raising his eyebrows. “...MONT.”

“Monarch Outpost Number Two.”

Jia tugged the man’s sleeve inquisitively. “...What’s a Monarch?”

Who looked to Max. “That’s just what I was wondering.”

“Well...” Who walked with Jia to a boat near to the island. “I suppose it’s back to the mainland with us... to civilization.” He gulped, suddenly realizing that he’d been stuck down there since 1973. A lot of things could change in ten years.

What sort of world would he be going back to? One where his family and friends thought him to be dead, where his earthly possessions were likely all gone... And that’s not mentioning poor Jia, who didn’t *have* family on the surface.

“You don’t have to leave, you know.” Dr. Graham told Who, out of nowhere, causing the older man’s head to turn. “I can see it in your eyes. You’re scared to go back.”

Who huffed. “That obvious?”

“...now that we know that there’s a whole other world under the surface of the earth, and that it supports human habitation, well...” Vivienne’s lips tilted up. “We’re going to need people to catalogue it. How about it?”

“I appreciate the offer, but I don’t think I’m ready to go back down there quite yet.”

“Who says *you* have to?” Vivienne replied. “Monarch has some of the most advanced drones known to exist. You could do it wirelessly. Or, Kong is an intelligent fellow. You could ask him to report back to you.”

“...I could...” Who granted.

“Or, if that’s not your cup of tea, you could just stay here.” Vivienne offered. “Keep watch over Kong.”

Who’s head snapped to her. “Keep watch?”

“Yes.” Vivienne nodded. “We’re a bit stretched as it is. We don’t have the resources to staff a proper outpost around the clock. But, supply drops every week or so for a single duo...” She said, looking between him and Jia.

Who, despite having been away from civilization as he knew it for so

long, found himself considering the offer. But, he still wondered something.

“Why us?” Who inquired.

“Kong is a bit like a cat, slow to trust.” Vivienne looked out to the ape. “The only one he really does is Max, and she can’t be here all the time. We need someone here to keep tabs on him. Monitor his growth, health, living patterns, et cetera.” She looked at him seriously. “Kong already trusts you enough to bring you back home with him.”

“Because we asked him to.”

“So?” Vivienne retorted. “If you asked me to bring you home with me, I wouldn’t, not unless I trusted you.”

“Good point.” Who crossed his arms, looking to the little girl by his side. Ultimately... it wasn’t *his* choice. He could go back to the mainland, fight through the tough adjustment if that was what Jia wanted. “What do you think, Jia? Go back to the mainland, or stay here?”

Jia looked between the flying machines and ships, misinterpreting Who’s statement to mean that he would send her with them and stay behind on the island. Jia shot forward, wrapping her arms around Who, holding onto him tightly.

“Ah, there we go, eh?” Who murmured in surprise. “It’s all right, sweetheart...” He stood up. “We’ll stay here. Besides... you lot need someone to watch that hole in the ground in case more nasty stuff come out of it.”

Vivienne smiled lightly. “That’s what I thought. Good luck, Doctor. You’ll probably need it.”

Some time later...

Kong yawned, getting to his feet groggily as the morning sun hit his eyes. He scratched his back, yawning again, stretching out and

chasing away the last bit of sleep out of his body. The titanic ape walked, idly surveying the island as he went about his morning business.

Kong gently shook a gigantic tree, an enormous fruit falling down into his waiting hand. He didn't even bother peeling the skin before taking a bite right out of it. He burped, finishing off the fruit, before yanking a tree out of the ground, pulling off the roots and the branches so that he could use it as a toothpick.

Not too far away, Doctor Who sat at a desk in a small building, his feet kicked up on the surface as he ate some of the food Monarch had provided.

"...I preferred Baker." Who commented for seemingly no particular reason as he watched the adventures of the gaudily-dressed man on the screen.

Jia looked at him curiously, but shook her head, going back to making the little action figure of Kong made out of old cloth and bits of junk.

Things on Skull Island had not changed much with the arrival of the two, but the simple fact remained that the resident giant ape now had people to socialize with.

And Kong was happy.

Notes for the Chapter:

Here be my [Tumblr](#)